

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

QUARTERLY  
*News-Letter*

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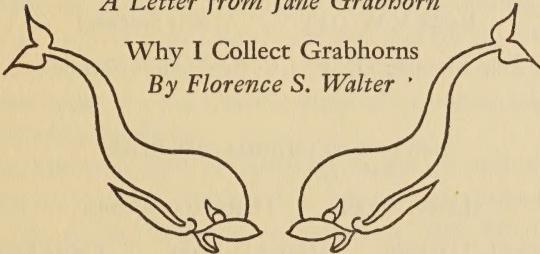
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## THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

FOUNDED IN 1912, The Book Club of California is a non-profit association of book-lovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast history, literature, and fine printing. Its chief aims are to further the interests of book collectors in the West and to promote an understanding and appreciation of fine books.

The Club is limited to six hundred members. When vacancies exist membership is open to all who are in sympathy with its aims and whose applications are approved by the Board of Directors. Regular Membership involves no responsibilities beyond payment of the annual dues of \$12.00. Dues date from the month of the member's election.

Members receive the *Quarterly News-Letter* and all parts of the current keepsake series, *Letters of the Gold Discovery*. They have the privilege, but not the obligation, of buying the Club publications which are limited, as a rule, to one copy per member.

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# QUARTERLY News-Letter



## THE GRABHORN PRESS

By *Tyrus G. Harmsen*

CALIFORNIA can well be proud of the accomplishments of two San Francisco printers, Edwin and Robert Grabhorn. There is neither space nor time to relate in this paper the many stories which have been told of these two well-known printers and the books which they have printed. I should like, however, to present a brief sketch of the history of the Press, to comment on some of its books, and to indicate some of their characteristics.

Edwin Grabhorn started his printing career in Indianapolis at the age of fourteen. His ambition was to be a music printer, and from 1909 to 1913 he worked in Seattle setting music type. He then returned to Indianapolis, where he started his own printing establishment, The Studio Press. In 1919 he and his younger brother, Robert, moved to

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Tyrus G. Harmsen is a member of The Book Club and, at present, studying at the Department of Library Science at the University of Michigan. This article on The Grabhorn Press is part of a larger work on "The History of Bookmaking in America" that was read in class and is here first published.

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San Francisco. Their press had several homes in that city until it moved to its present quarters at 1335 Sutter Street.

Certainly the printing ambitions of the Grabhorns were influenced and inspired, as was the work of other prominent American printers, by William Morris and his printing ideals. The Grabhorns' objectives, as Updike's, was to do common work uncommonly well. An announcement of the Press in 1917 read in part as follows: "We often hear it said that our work bears a different 'stamp.' We hope it does—the stamp of the best in our lives." The truth with which the printers have lived up to that statement is to be found in the books which have come from their press since 1920. It is interesting to note, I think, that the printers have never made any effort to keep a collection of the things they have printed. They say that they never considered many of them particularly worthwhile.

The work of the Press remained relatively obscure to the world until the latter 1920's. The work during the early twenties was somewhat imitative of the work of prominent printers of the day. Gregg Anderson, in his article on the Press in *Print*, mentions various books of this period which reflect, in an individual manner, the work of some of the famous private presses, a field of special interest to Edwin Grabhorn at the time. In 1927 the American Institute of Graphic Arts awarded its gold medal to the Grabhorns for their *Letter of Amerigo Vespucci*, printed for The Book Club of California. This award had previously been made only to Bruce Rogers, Carl P. Rollins, and Daniel B. Updike. In 1942 the Institute awarded its medal to the Grabhorns again, "for sound craftsmanship and beauty in typography." The Institute also held an exhibition of their work.

Some of the most lavish productions of the Press have been done for Random House. In 1928 there appeared *The Voyage and Travails of Sir John Maundevile*. Then in 1930 came the monumental *Leaves of Grass*. This book remains the *magnum opus* of the Press. Its production was no easy task. The printing of the folio pages caused such a strain on the press being used that Edwin Grabhorn suggested, when printing the colophon, "400 copies printed and the press destroyed," as the appropriate statement. But the efforts were worthwhile. "I am very glad it all happened," he wrote later. "I would go through any form of hysteria again if we could produce another *Leaves of Grass*."

Following the crash of 1929, the market for high-priced, limited editions gave out. Fortunately for the Grabhorns, they were able to

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branch out into another field in order to keep things going. Edwin Grabhorn had for several years collected rare books and manuscripts relating to the early history of California, and he knew from experience that reprints in that field were of definite interest to a small but serious group of collectors. From 1932 to 1937 the Press issued its three "Rare Americana" series. The titles for these series, selected for their textual worth and rarity, were reprinted in the colorful Grabhorn manner and were modestly priced. The titles included such western "classics" as the *Letters of Dame Shirley*, the *Duke of Sacramento*, and *Phœnixiana*, to select three titles at random. The series were a great success, and will remain, I think, of lasting value.

The first book of the Press in the field of Californiana was the *Reglamento* of 1929. One of the finest of all the Grabhorn books appeared in the same year—the *Relation* of Alvar Nuñez Cabeça de Vaca. This was set in Lutetia type, a face which was designed by J. Van Krimpen of Holland. A supply of Lutetia had been purchased for use in the *Leaves of Grass*, but the trial pages did not prove successful. Rather than allow the brand new supply of Lutetia to rest on hand, the printers decided to set up the *Relation*. Lutetia is a fine type face, and has been used to good advantage in quite a few of the Grabhorn books. Hazel Dreis has this story to tell concerning the *Relation*: "A fluttery young woman asked Ed the price of the *Cabeça de Vaca*. Ed said, 'Twenty dollars.' She gasped and said, 'What can possibly be put into a book to make it worth twenty dollars?' Ed got that far-away look and answered, 'Lady, all my heart's blood and my life's best dreams.' She paid and left without a word."<sup>1</sup>

*The Santa Fe Trail to California* was printed in 1931 for The Book Club of California. This was set in Bruce Rogers' Centaur type, with large Weiss initials used for the title-page. Gregg Anderson has said of the illustrations for this book: "The maps and small drawings which decorate the book are very delicately and beautifully reproduced. In the handling of such matter, the taste of the Grabhorns is almost infallible. In spite of the use of the most diverse kind of illustrative material, it will be found that the illustration has always been made an integral part of the book, and reproduced as it should be reproduced."<sup>2</sup> Another example of expert handling of reproduced material

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1. American Institute of Graphic Arts, *Catalogue of an Exhibition of the Work of Edwin and Robert Grabhorn of San Francisco* (New York, 1942), p. 19.

2. The Grabhorn Press, *Print*, Summer, 1942, p. 64.

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is to be found in *The Maps of the California Gold Region* (1942). These are but some of the more sumptuous volumes which have been printed by the Grabhorns in the category of Californiana.

About half of the books which bear the Grabhorn imprint have been set by hand. Much of the actual work of producing the books has been done by the two brothers themselves. When it comes to designing a book, they do not lay out the work with pencil and paper — their method is a process of trial and error. ‘He [Ed] never made a layout in his life. A stick was all he needed, and plenty of room. Even locking the page up for press did not mean that he was through with it. ‘You’ve got to see it on the paper to know whether it’s right or not.’”<sup>3</sup> It is because of this procedure, I think, that the Grabhorns have achieved much of their individuality and excellence in design.

One of the chief characteristics of a Grabhorn book is its colorful originality. It was this colorful quality which was emphasized in an exhibition of the work of the Press at The Huntington Library in 1945. Another characteristic feature of the books is the large number of type faces which have been employed in them and the variety of papers on which they have been printed. The pattern papers which have been used for bindings have enough variety, effectiveness, and restraint to make them ideally suited to their purpose. Above all else, the printers have never forgotten that the primary purpose of a book is to be read, and their books can certainly claim this essential quality. Grabhorn books are not only readable, but a veritable invitation to reading.

The Grabhorns have never ceased to experiment with various materials in order to achieve a desired effect. The plates in the *Naval Sketches of the War in California* serve as a notable example.

The keyplate was reproduced in black and white by collotype. These pages were then overprinted as many as ten times from plates cut out of linoleum, which were sandpapered to produce shading. The very roughness of the method helped to produce a remarkable facsimile of the original water-color drawings. Edwin Grabhorn himself says he has looked at the job lately with a good deal of respect, wondering how he was able to achieve the effect.<sup>4</sup>

It is not surprising to read in the prospectus of the first of a new series of Grabhorn Press books that the series “will be a new experiment in

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3. Gregg Anderson, *Recollections of The Grabhorn Press* (Los Angeles, 1935), p. 15.

4. Anderson, *The Grabhorn Press, Print*, Summer, 1942, p. 65.

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## The Letter of Amerigo Vespucci

DESCRIBING HIS FOUR VOYAGES

TO THE NEW WORLD

1497~1504



San Francisco  
THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA  
Mcmxxvi

(The Letter of Amerigo Vespucci) This is the book that received the gold medal award by the American Institute of Graphic Arts in 1926. In the original, the map was hand-colored. (G.B. 85)

color-printing techniques." The pictures for *Mliss*, the first title in the new series, have been printed in colors from textiles, sandpaper, leather and linoleum—a process which will be recognized as both an

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unusual and, I think, a successful experiment in color-printing.

Perhaps these few paragraphs have given you some indication of the nature of the work of Edwin and Robert Grabhorn, two of America's finest printers of the present day. I have appended a selected list of books and articles which will give some more detailed glimpses of the Press, its printers, and its books. I should like to conclude with the following words of Gregg Anderson:

Every book that Ed has worked over has a friendly feel—and the friendly look of a good home-made apple pie. Their beauty is never cold and austere; his books smile. They are not mechanically perfect nor is the proofreading beyond reproach, but even these flaws seem excusable and inevitable. We can accept the mistakes in a daily newspaper and understand why they occur, and any genuine Grabhorn enthusiast can do the same for their books, because it would be hard to find books more satisfying to own, more worth keeping, than those from The Grabhorn Press.<sup>5</sup>

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5. *Recollections of The Grabhorn Press* (Los Angeles, 1935), pp. 15–16.

## *Quarterly News-Letter*

### ON THE MAKING OF FINE BOOKS

*By Edwin Grabhorn*

LET US IGNORE the most important feature of the book: its contents, or literary quality; for in this article we are concerned only with the printer's part in its creation.

If we compare the growth of a book with a tree, we may liken its back to the trunk of the tree; the cover to its branches; and the spreading of its leaves to its pages. A tree is strong, sturdy and complete in itself, able to withstand the vicissitudes of time. A book to be enduring must first be strong, and to be strong, its growth must be slow. The paper on which the book is to be printed cannot be of poor quality, such as newspapers are printed on; nor shiny, because very smooth paper reflects light, which is hard on the eyes. We will want the paper a warm white, for if there is blue in it, the type will look as though it were printed on ice.

Having selected, then, a warm strong paper of a weight such that when the book is opened, the leaves will fall of themselves, and not stand up like a bound volume of playing cards, our next step is the selection of the type. The type also must be strong but not heavy; and it should be free from novelty. For we must always remember that printing is a mechanical invention for reproducing thought, and we have no right to be obscure. The type must be set so that the spaces between words are distinct separations; yet not so far apart that it is closer to the next line than to the next word. This type is firmly impressed into the paper, so that it becomes a part of it. The ink on the type must be enough to cover the surface of the page, but not so much as to glisten. The fine book does not need pictures, but if we want illustrations, they should be done through a close collaboration between the artist and the printer. The pictures must become a part of the book, and not be inserted haphazardly throughout the text. This fine book is a unit, remember, and we cannot tolerate foreign elements.

The binding covers must be firmly attached to the back of the book—so firmly that they cannot be pulled off even if the end-sheets have not been pasted down. If you examine the binding on the average book, you will find that if, with a knife, you cut the two end-papers at the joint, the book will pull apart. The fine book should be practically

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This essay first appeared in the San Francisco *Chronicle*, October 18, 1948.

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indestructible. The first book printed from movable types is the so-called Gutenberg Bible, printed in two large folio volumes. Of this book, no less than forty-two copies exist today. Under the circumstances, not more than 250 copies can have been printed, and it is doubtful whether the originators of this publishing venture could have found purchasers for more than 100 copies. If we assume that 250 copies were printed, then nearly one-fifth of the copies of that first book printed 400 years ago still exist! And it is only during the last century that special protective devices for the preservation of books have been made.

A well-made book is one of the most durable objects made by man. If the present-day printer can recapture the strength and durability of the fifteenth-century printer without stealing his types and designs, but put something of his own day and age into his books, he will not have to worry about recognition. His future is assured.

We have often been asked why we came to San Francisco to print books. It may sound like a Chamber of Commerce boast, but the two things that attracted us most were climate and competition. From the discovery of gold to the present day, San Francisco has always appealed to and supported the craftsman. Not the least important of her craftsmen have been the printers, and the keener the rivalry the better the work.

Without excessive heat or cold, San Francisco's damp, cool weather is especially beneficial to the best kind of printing.

With such natural advantages, and with a growing, appreciative audience, there is no reason why, in another century, San Francisco cannot become the seat of a permanent Renaissance, with a culture that will grow and grow until it becomes the illumination of the world.



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lepte vpon a tree and sauē hym self, sayenge:  
Now shalle we see, who shalle playe best for to  
preserue and sauē hym self. And whanne the catte  
was vpon a tree, he loked abouē hym, and sawe  
how the dogges held the foxe with theyr teethe, to  
whome he cryed and seyd: O godsep and subtyle  
foxe, of thy thowsand wyles that syth late thow  
coudest doo, lete me now see, and shewe to me one  
of them, the foxe answered not, but was killed of the  
dogges and the catte was sauēd. And therfore  
the wyse ought not to despraye the symple. For  
suche supposest to be moche wyse whiche is a kynd  
and a very foole.

The vñ fable is of the hegoote and of the wulf.

**T**he feble ought not to arme hym ageynst  
the stronge. As recyteth this present  
fable of a wulf, whiche some tyme ranne  
after a hegoot, and the hegoot for to sauē hym lept  
vpon a rocke, and the wulf besyeged hym. And  
after whan they had duelled there two or thre dayes,  
the wulf begonne to wexe hongry, and the hegoote  
to haue thurat. And thus the wulf went for to ete,  
and the hegoot went for to drynke. And as the he-  
goot dranke he sawe his shadowe in the water, and

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"The Subtyl Historyes and Fables of Esope" printed in two colors and rubricated  
throughout by Valenti Angelo, 1930 (G.B. 142)

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### SOON THERE WILL BE ANOTHER MUSE

By Robert Grabhorn

PRINTING is being lifted out of its craft-class into the higher level of art. To be sure, the men who have been doing the lifting have not ventured to call this new level—art; they deny such presumption. Nevertheless, the proof is overwhelming and conclusive; for now we have critics of printing.

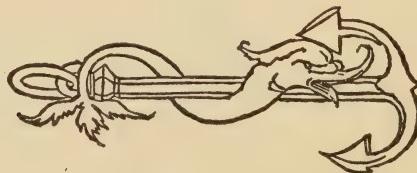
For many years a part of the public has been buying books, not for their literary content; not for their value as rare editions, but solely for their physical appearance. Until recently, these enthusiasts were allowed to pursue their outlandish hobby undisturbed. They did their choosing indiscriminately. There were no signposts for their guidance. No canons of taste. No rules. No one to point out the good from the bad. The customers were being fooled; they were actually selecting books according to their own tastes and enthusiasms. Obviously, something needed to be done.

Something has been done. The critics are functioning furiously. New books are being subjected to grave and scientific critical analysis. They are being condemned or praised according to the percentage of beauty remaining in the retort at the end of the process. There are even factions among the critics and “schools” of printing.

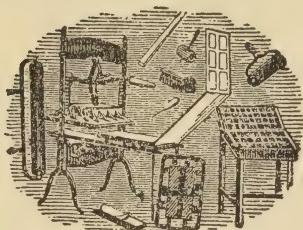
And we, as printers, not artists, register a mild protest. We have built up a clientele, and enjoyed ourselves thoroughly while doing so. We have even reached the point where our unsuspecting public is pleased with most of what we offer them. But now our little game has been exposed—and we face the necessity of becoming artists and pleasing the critics. We infinitely prefer to continue to fool the public and to please ourselves.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This essay was first printed in 1929 as a broadsheet by The Grabhorn Press and written by Robert Grabhorn as an answer to certain critics who preferred labeling, glibly, all Far West printing as “the California School.”



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**THE GRABHORN PRESS  
HAS MOVED**

*Because our building on Commercial Street was urgently needed by our neighbor, a manufacturer of vital war materials, The Grabhorn Press announces its removal.*

*Our new, and we hope, permanent address is 1335 Sutter Street, San Francisco, where, under existing emergency restrictions, we are trying to get the presses running and to make this unusual building attractive and homelike. Here we will be pleased to meet you. Remember our new telephone number is Ordway 9460.*

Announcement of the Grabhorns' last move, August 1942.

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NOTE: After much persuasion, Jane Grabhorn finally consented to write a note on the Grabhorns if she could write it as a letter to her brand new niece Victoria—her brother Bill's daughter. We are delighted to reproduce it here, fittingly decorated with the marks of the Colt and Jumbo Presses.

### Dear Victoria:

I am glad to hear that you are now taking orange juice and vitamins, and that you no longer keep your mother awake at night. You gave me a bad time those first three weeks of your life—a bad time and a wonderful time. I still don't know why I love you so much. A little howling, squirming, spitting animal. But I did and I do.

This has been a tough week and I hope you will not decide to become a printer when you grow up. When I married your uncle sixteen and a half years ago I had no intention of doing anything much except cook and dust around the place once in a while. I thought maybe I might join a women's club and play a little bridge once a week and also that I might practice my piano occasionally. And to tell you the truth it is very hard for me to figure out just exactly why and how I wound up here in a dirty smock and a pair of brown slacks, my hands ragged and my temper likewise. When I was a little girl my ambition was to be a lion tamer, not a long-hair—not a proofreader. I suppose it has something to do with a liking for words. Along with lions, all my life I have loved words, phrases, sentences, diction, letters. When I first started to print, Ed Grabhorn used to say to me, as I gazed adoringly at my creations, "The trouble with you is any words you set up in any kind of type look good to you." That seems so long ago. Now believe me, a book is something that you hate when you start,

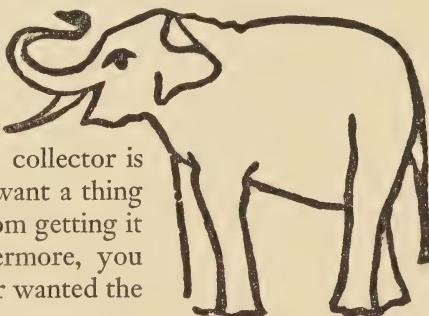
you detest when it's half through, you kick it when it's being folded for the bindery, and that you only love when it's done. I can scarcely distinguish in my memory one from another of the books that I have done. Think of how the Grabhorns must feel. They've been dishing them out twenty years longer.

For a bunch of old folks however, we've been doing a lot of work this month. I suppose I should qualify that "old folks" since Arlen is only eighteen. But the rest of us—Ed and Bob and



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Mallette; Sherwood and Trina and I have been at it a long time. This week as I say, we completed the Holmes catalogue (and oh, Victoria, how I wish you were old enough to hear about *that*. You know a printer isn't just supposed to be able to print. He also has to be a scholar, a linguist, a psychologist, and a businessman); we completed The Book Club book *Ace High; The Luck of Roaring Camp* of Bret Harte's (I hate Bret Harte), for Ranshoff's; and Judge Cosgrave's book on early justice in California. Roy Vernon and Margaret Cosgrave Sowers no doubt do not realize how amazed they should be when they finally receive their bound copies of that book. The Grabhorns contracted to print it years ago and had got half way through it when the Judge died. I don't believe they ever had any intention of finishing it. I remember the Judge as a very charming old gentleman, and one of the compensations of being in this business of *belles lettres* is that occasionally you do meet a gentleman—not often, but once in a while. It is not in the best Anglo-Saxon tradition for a man to be associated with the arts. Mostly you meet collectors, and Victoria, when you are older, I must tell you about collectors. Now, you take a pack rat—he leaves something for everything he takes. Not a collector. A true collector is so mean that even if he doesn't want a thing he'll buy it either to keep you from getting it or to run up the price. Furthermore, you can't convince him that you never wanted the damned thing in the first place.



You take your uncle's brother Edwin—not a mean man in the ordinary course of events. But he's a collector, and in the pursuit of his mania he is relentless, unforgiving and unreasonable. And what is making him suffer these days is that he can't collect Grabhorn books. He's so smart that if his name was Peabody, that's what he'd be doing all right—collecting Grabhorns'. But a sort of what you might call arrogant modesty prevents him from it and the result is he keeps buying pie-crust tables and rat-tailed spoons and all the time both he and your uncle could be rich men and I could be sashaying in mink and eating fish eggs if they would just buy and sell their own books.

Your uncle has a whole bookcase full of books that are falling apart because they were printed before 1500, but if a guest in our house

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wants to see a Grabhorn book, your uncle looks blank and laughs at him. Your uncle's brother is what you might call an experimenter and an optimist—the inventor type. Your uncle is a perfectionist and a pessimist—the professorial type, in a sophisticated sort of way. Probably the reason Bob is a pessimist is because Ed is an optimist.

I share their amazement every time a book is finished. There appears to be no organization, no planning, no system. Not only does the right hand not know what the left is doing, but the left hand has no idea what the hell it's doing either. In fact, when the Grabhorns are "at work," the general effect is of both hands being tied behind the back and two men walking around blindfolded. Then suddenly, there's the book. Finished. I snarl, sneer, worry—but somewhere along the line someone must have been working. Because there's the book. Their teamwork is so successful that it is undetectable. Their combined talents are so perfectly synchronized that all appearance of effort as ordinary mortals know it, is completely effaced.

I've seen many people come and go to and from this shop in the past fifteen years, and I don't believe that a single one of them, including myself, has left a single imprint, a trace, a mark, or a memory. I don't believe that one of us has exerted the slightest influence. These men are completely self-sufficient, and although entirely dependent one upon another almost for their existence, they are totally without need of anyone or anything else. This is a hell of a thing for a wife to contemplate, but it is the result of much mature reflection and careful observation. To work in this atmosphere, if you have any ideas yourself, is an experience in humility, believe me. I suppose it was when I began to realize all this, that I started to try to do something myself. And don't get me wrong—little three-months-old niece. Humility is not my line at all. It was not in the spirit of humility and "humble admiration" that I printed any of the Jumbo or Colt Press books.

It was very much in the spirit of defiance. I may be laboring in the shadow of the pyramids, and I look in vain at catalogues to see the price of Colt Press books double and triple—but by and large, I like what I have done, and I have enjoyed doing it.

I send you and your mother and father all love. This won't be so much of a Christmas for you, but we'll have a lot of fun next one.

Your doting AUNT JANE

November 19, 1948

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### WHY I COLLECT GRABHORNS

*By Florence S. Walter*

MY FIRST meeting with a Grabhorn was in 1920, when the two brothers Ed and Bob came to San Francisco. I wanted to have a little Christmas card printed, and I was told of a couple of printers who had just come here, who were supposed to be very good. They did the job for me, and today this is a very rare item. I think fifty were printed at the time, and today there are only two in existence, one belonging to one of my daughters, and the other to me. This meeting was a very happy experience and has developed into a wonderful friendship. From time to time, I saw books they had printed, most of them for The Book Club of California, and for that rare patron of the arts, the late Albert M. Bender.

It is now twenty-seven years since I began collecting Grabhorniana, and while I never expect to be fortunate enough to own every item, I'm always hoping. The tantalizing part of it is, when only five or ten copies of a book are privately printed. Those items are practically impossible to acquire, but if your patience holds out, they occasionally turn up. Other items difficult to obtain are those printed in Indianapolis, where the Grabhorns started their career. But that's part of the fun of the game, and some of those items have found their way into my library shelves too.

Strangely enough, some of the books which are most difficult to locate are those of which from five hundred to a thousand copies were printed. They have, for some unknown reason, disappeared. At the time, people apparently attached no value to them, and they went the way of many books, into the waste basket or the garbage can. That's probably where the little Christmas card of 1920 went!

I've always been interested in fine book-making, and I consider the Grabhorns tops. They have everything—a sense of the beautiful, fine craftsmanship, an abundance of originality—everything that goes into the book beautiful. They are real artists, and I'm sure The Grabhorn Press will always be thought of as one of the very important presses.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Florence S. Walter, a Club member, is a noted Grabhorn enthusiast and collector.

## *The Book Club of California*

### PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

THE CHRISTMAS BOOK, announcement of which is below, strikes your committee as one of the most delightful books The Grabhorn Press has produced. Give a fine printer something like a dime novel to play with and—well, it's likely to strike his imagination. It struck the Grabhorns' imagination, right enough, and the result is a book that ought to charm the birds right off the trees. But you'll see, anyway. And when you do, please note by the announcement that this year members will be allowed to order two copies (Christmas being so near), until the edition of 500 copies is exhausted. That's likely to happen, too, so orders should be in early.

For Spring, your committee has a book coming which is aimed straight at 1949, the hundredth anniversary of the gold rush proper.

It's to be called "Gold Rush Forty-Nine," and is a selective bibliography of 49 titles of classic works bearing on the gold rush itself.

A special sub-committee has been at work on this for some six months now, aided by a questionnaire sent out to members of the Club who collect in the field of Californiana, and the weeding-out process is now completed. Each title will be listed, with the appropriate bibliographical information, and there will be copious notes covering later editions in each case, and similar data. It is expected that this "Gold Rush Forty-Nine" will become a useful and valuable guide to collectors everywhere. That it will be a book up to the Club's high standard in design and printing is your committee's responsibility.

Other books are in preparation for 1949, of course, but it is too early to give details now.

Special note should be made of the Keepsake Committee's plan for next year which you will find separately announced. It is our belief that the Keepsakes for 1949 will be the most sought-after and most admired series the Club has issued in many years.

### THE CHRISTMAS BOOK

As its Christmas book for 1948, the Club announces the publication on December 1 of a work likely to add in no small measure to the hilarity of the holiday season, to wit: *Ace High, the 'Frisco Detective, or, The Girl Sport's Double Game. A Story of the Sierra & the Golden Gate City.*

*Quarterly News-Letter*



# ACE HIGH

## THE 'FRISCO DETECTIVE

OR, THE GIRL SPORT'S DOUBLE GAME.



A STORY OF THE SIERRA & THE GOLDEN GATE CITY

BY C. E. TRIPP.

REPRINTED FROM BEADLE'S HALF-DIME LIBRARY,

NUMBER 814, FEBRUARY 28, 1893.



SAN FRANCISCO :: THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

1948

The Book Club's 1948 Christmas book. The original is in two colors throughout.

## *The Book Club of California*

*Ace High* is the production—and very likely the masterpiece—of one C. E. Tripp, an author whose novels (now unfortunately in eclipse) once claimed the goggle-eyed attention of thousands of readers of Beadle's Half-Dime Library. The story, in the best blood-and-thunder tradition of the vanished Dime Novel School, will have an added attraction to Club members because it is one of the few paper-back thrillers with a California locale. It is a tale jam-packed with violent plot and counterplot, in which villainy is ultimately unmasked and virtue emerges triumphant, all set in a California that never existed except in the fertile imagination of author C. E. Tripp.

For the Club's edition of this epic, David Magee has written an extremely entertaining introduction, and The Grabhorn Press has designed a book which so admirably captures the spirit and flavor of the original that an uncommonly heavy demand is anticipated. It is a volume of sixty-four pages, printed in two colors throughout on a double-column page, size 8½ by 12¼ inches, with six chapter-head illustrations by Mallette Dean, and it is bound in decorated boards of an appropriate pattern especially designed for this work.

For the benefit of those members who want an extra copy of *Ace High* for use as a gift, the Club in this instance is suspending its one-copy-per-member rule, and orders for one additional copy will be filled as long as the edition of 500 lasts. It is urgently recommended that members who have not as yet placed their orders fill out and return the enclosed card promptly. Price: \$8.50, plus 26c tax for sales in San Francisco, 21c elsewhere in California.

### *We wish to acknowledge with thanks:*

The Sterling Engraving Company of San Francisco for all of the engravings used in this issue of the Quarterly . . .

To Mr. Kevin Wallace for the privilege of re-using his illustration of the Grabhorns at work . . .

To Club Members Tyrus G. Harmsen for his notes on the Grabhorn Press and to Florence S. Walter for her opinions on collecting Grabhorn . . .

To Jane Grabhorn for her amusing and human letter on working with the Grabhorns . . .

To the San Francisco Chronicle and to Edwin Grabhorn for the rights to reprint his article on the making of fine books . . .

To Robert Grabhorn for his help and assistance . . .

To all, the Editors are deeply grateful for without their unselfish help, this issue of Grabhorniana could not have been done.

## *Quarterly News-Letter*

### THE 1949 KEEPSAKES

THE FINAL two parts of *Letters of the Gold Discovery* are being sent members during December, thus concluding what is quite generally recognized as one of the most interesting and historically valuable keepsakes yet issued by the Club.

Preparations for the 1949 series are now nearing completion and it is a pleasure to report that these too promise to be extremely attractive. Like the current series, next year's keepsakes will consist of twelve folders, which will be distributed monthly. Each folder will contain a reproduction, in color, of one of a series of lithographed "Sailing Cards" issued by the operators of American clipper ships advertising their departure from eastern ports for California during gold rush times and later. These colorful cards, highly interesting from both the pictorial and typographical standpoints, have now become extremely rare and examples are much sought after by collectors. The Club is fortunate in having access to an extended collection, from which twelve examples having a particular California interest have been selected for reproduction.

The series will be under the general editorship of John Haskell Kemble, recognized authority on the maritime history of the West Coast, and the individual texts will be written by men particularly qualified to tell the stories of the ships advertised on the accompanying sailing cards. The folders will be designed and printed by The Grabhorn Press, which will also reproduce the cards by the special and much admired color process originated at the Press.

By present plans, Part One of this uncommonly attractive series will be sent members toward the end of January.

## *The Book Club of California*

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THE RECOLLECTION by Gerald Heard. Limited to 50 copies.	\$3.50
STRAY LEAVES by Maud de Lorme Martin. Illustrations by the author. Signed.	\$3.00
HEARN AND HIS BIOGRAPHERS by Oscar Lewis. The Record of a Literary Controversy together with a Group of Letters from Lafadio Hearn to Joseph Tunison. Now first published. 350 Copies.	\$10.00
POEMS by Madeline Gleason. 250 Copies.	\$5.00
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CELEBRATION by Hoyt Hudson. A Book of Poems. 500 Copies.	\$5.00
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## *Quarterly News-Letter*

### ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

The following have been elected to membership since the Autumn issue of the News-Letter:

MEMBER		SPONSOR
Miss Juliet B. Clark	San Francisco	Miss Edith M. Coulter
Cleveland Public Library	Cleveland, Ohio	Mrs. Elizabeth Downs
John F. Everett	San Francisco	Douglas Black
Mrs. Margaret M. Griffin	Ontario, California	George Kubiskie
Nevada State Historical Society	Reno, Nevada	Glen Dawson
Mrs. Virginia C. Parker	San Francisco	Mrs. Edna M. Parratt
Pasadena Public Library	Pasadena	Glen Dawson
Provincial Archives	Victoria, B. C.	Glen Dawson
Miss Louise Roewekamp	Los Angeles	Glen Dawson
Southwest Museum Library	Los Angeles	Glen Dawson

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